

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 096494

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ORIGIN MBFR-03

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TO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY

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TOSEC 152

E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PARM

SUBJ: MBFR EXPLORATORY TALKS MAY 12- MAY 18, 1973

1. FOLLOWING INFORMATION MEMORANDUM FORWARDED TO ACTING SECRETARY TODAY:

2. WITH THE BEGINNING OF PLENARY SESSIONS OF THE MBFR TALKS, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETEEN PARTICIPANTS THIS WEEK PRESENTED THEIR OPENING STATEMENTS. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS BY SPOKESMEN OF THE TWO SIDES ON AN AGENDA FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS. SOVIET INSISTENCE ON DELAYING FURTHER AGENDA DISCUSSIONS FOR SEVERAL DAYS MAY BE A HINT THAT THE SOVIETS INTEND TO PROLONG THE MBFR EXPLORATIONS.

3. OPENING STATEMENTS OUTLINE EASTERN VIEWS - PLENARY SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 096494

SESSIONS OF THE MBFR TALKS OPENED ON MAY 14 WITH DECLARATIONS ON PROCEDURES AND PARTICIPATION MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRIOR EAST- WEST AGREEMENT. IN FURTHER PLENARY SESSIONS ON THE FOLLOWING TWO DAYS, EACH OF THE NINETEEN DELEGATIONS PRESENTED A GENERAL OPENING STATEMENT- ON THE EASTERN SIDE THESE REMARKS WERE, THOUGH PROPAGANDISTIC IN TONE AND SUBSTANCE, DECIDEDLY IRENIC AND UNSENSATIONAL. THE ROMANIANS APART, THE EASTERN REPRESENTATIVES CLAIMED TO SEE THE MBFR TALKS AS THE LOGICAL CULMINATION OF THE POLICIES OF DETENTE AND DISARMAMENT FOSTERED SINCE 1917 BY THE SOVIET UNION AND SPECIFICALLY PLACED THESE TALKS IN THE MORE RECENT CONTEXT OF THE GERMAN EASTERN TREATIES AND THE CSCE. IN FACT THE SOVIET STATEMENT TENDED TO SUBORDINATE MBFR TO CSCE, CHARACTERIZING THE LATTER AS " THE FOCAL POINT OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS IN EUROPE" AND THE FORMER MERELY AS " ANOTHER BIG STEP" TOWARD DETENTE. THE EASTERN STATEMENTS ALSO CALLED FOR A RAPID CONCLUSION TO CSCE PREPARATORY TALKS, AND WHILE THIS APPEAL MAY HAVE BEEN INTENDED AS AN IMPLIED CONDITION OF EASTERN COOPERATION IN COMPLETING THE MBFR EXPLORATIONS, NO EXPLICIT CONJUNCTION BETWEEN THE TWO CONFERENCES WAS MADE.

4. EASTERN DELEGATIONS ALSO REFERRED TO POSSIBLE SUBSEQUENT REGIONAL FORCE REDUCTION CONFERENCES AND THE BALKANS WERE EXPLICITLY MENTIONED FOR SUCH FURTHER TALKS BY BOTH THE ROMANIANS AND THE BULGARIANS. IN THE SOLE COMMENT ON THE WORK YET TO BE DONE IN VIENNA, THE SOVIETS OBSERVED THAT THE TIME, PLACE AND AN AGENDA FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS REMAIN TO BE SETTLED. EASTERN DELEGATIONS FURTHER PRAISED THEIR OWN FIRMNESS ON THE HUNGARIAN ISSUE, REJECTED A BLOC- TO- BLOC APPROACH TO FORCE REDUCTIONS AND RECOMMENDED THE NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD BE OPEN TO ALL INTERESTED EUROPEAN STATES, INCLUDING NEUTRALS. DROPPING THEIR PREVIOUSLY AGREED FORMULA THAT OTHER EUROPEAN STATES MIGHT ATTEND " AS OBSERVERS", THE SOVIETS REFERRED TO SUCH ATTENDANCE " IN ONE CAPACITY OR ANOTHER."

5. AGENDA DISCUSSIONS - IN CONTRAST TO THE SMOOTH ORDER OF BUSINESS DURING THE INITIAL THREE DAYS OF THE PLENARY SESSIONS, AGREEMENT ON PROCEDURES FOR THE DISCUSSION OF THE AGENDA PROVED DIFFICULT TO REACH. THE SOVIETS FIRST  
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PAGE 03 STATE 096494

INSISTED ON POSTPONING THE INITIAL PLENARY ON THE AGENDA FROM THE MORNING TO THE AFTERNOON OF MAY 17 AND FURTHER DEMANDED THE DELAY OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE AGENDA WORKING GROUP FROM MAY 18, AS HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY AGREED, TO MAY 21. MOREOVER, AFTER HAVING FIRST URGED THAT THE AGENDA DISCUSSIONS SHOULD TAKE PLACE SOLELY IN PLENARY SESSIONS, THE SOVIET REPRESENTATIVE THEN SUGGESTED THE

ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EAST- WEST EXPLORATORY GROUP THAT WOULD INCLUDE ALL FOUR PACT DIRECT PARTICIPANTS. IN RESPONSE, THE WESTERN AD HOC GROUP PROPOSED, DESPITE STRONG TURKISH DISPLEASURE, THAT THE ALLIES SHOULD BE REPRESENTED BY ALL WESTERN DIRECT PARTICIPANTS, EXCEPT LUXEMBOURG, THOUGH RESERVING THE RIGHT TO CHANGE ALLIED MEMBERSHIP IN THE EXPLORATORY GROUP TO INCLUDE A FLANK REPRESENTATIVE. ON THIS BASIS, AN EAST- WEST UNDERSTANDING WAS REACHED THAT WHILE THE AGENDA WOULD BE DISCUSSED PERIODICALLY IN PLENARY SESSIONS, AN ENTIRELY INFORMAL GROUP -- THE FOUR PACT AND SIX WESTERN REPRESENTATIVES --

WOULD MEET REGULARLY TO EXPLORE AGENDA ISSUES AND PREPARE FOR THE PLENARY SESSIONS.

6. THE INITIAL AGENDA DISCUSSION TOOK PLACE IN PLENARY SESSION ON MAY 18 WHEN THE CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE, AS AGREED SOME TIME AGO BY THE AD HOC GROUP, MADE THE WESTERN PRESENTATION. THE EASTERN POSITION WAS OUTLINED BY THE POLES AND THE EAST GERMANS, THOUGH THE ROMANIANS MADE A SEPARATE PRESENTATION. AS SET OUT BY THE POLES, THE EASTERN PROPOSAL AMOUNTS TO A THREE- ITEM AGENDA: (1) REDUCTIONS OF ARMED FORCES AND ARMAMENTS; (2) THE AREA TO BE COVERED BY POSSIBLE AGREEMENTS ( CENTRAL EUROPE); AND (3) THE PRINCIPLE OF UNDIMINISHED SECURITY. THE EAST GERMAN STATEMENT PROPOSED THE POSSIBLE ADDITION OF AN ITEM ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKING GROUPS BUT CAUTIONED AGAINST A LENGTHY OR DETAILED AGENDA. THE NEXT PLENARY SESSION TO DISCUSS THE AGENDA IS SCHEDULED TO BE HELD ON MAY 24.

7. MOST ALLIED REPRESENTATIVES IN VIENNA ARE CONVINCED THAT THE SOVIET POSTPONEMENT OF THE FORMAL AND INFORMAL  
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PAGE 04 STATE 096494

SESSIONS TO DISCUSS THE AGENDA AMOUNT TO A DELIBERATE  
DELAYING TACTIC  
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